Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PINEAPPLE FUNGUS OR ENFANT DE PIN OR WABADOU

J. H. FAULL

"There groweth also upon the larch tree a kind of mushrum or excrescence, not such as is upon other trees, but whiter, softer, more loose and spongie than any other of the mushrooms, and good for medicine, which beareth the name of *Agaricus* or Agaricke." In these words Gerard, in his Herbal (1597) for English readers prefaced his account of the polypore, *Fomes officinalis* (Vill.). This fungus grows on the larches, *Larix europaea* and *L. sibirica*, in many parts of Europe and Asia, and according to Marie[1] on the cedar of Lebanon in northern Africa. Comparatively recently it was discovered by botanists in America where it is now known to occur widely distributed and on at least sixteen species of coniferous hosts distributed among the genera *Abies, Picea, Larix, Tsuga, Pinus* and *Pseudotsuga.*

To modern botanists *Fomes officinalis*[2] is of main interest because of its parasitism and the decay it produces in timber; but formerly, back to earliest times, it was considered almost solely because of its medicinal value. Dioscorides, Pliny, Galen, and their successors down to the beginning of the last century accorded it an important place in their writings on medicinal plants, and it was recommended by them in the treatment of nearly all the physical and the mental ills to which man is subject. There can be little question but that the knowledge of its powers was current among the inhabitants of Europe long before the era of materia medica and that many superstitions were associated with its use. But the history of *F. officinalis* in America is unknown, and because of this I venture to bring together a few fragments of information that have come to my hand.

---

[1] "Il a été retrouvé sur le cèdre par M. Trabut à Teniet-el-Had, et par nous-mêmes sur le Haizer. Ce champignon agit, par l'acide agaricinique qu'il contient, en paralysant les nerfs des glandes sudoripares, d'où son emploi pour combattre les sueurs profuses des tuberculeux. A la dose de 2–3 gr., le *P. officinalis* produit de la gastro-enterite; mais il n'y a pas à redouter d'empoisonnements par ce champignon, sa consistance ne permettant pas son emploi en dehors de la thérapeutique." Maire, R.: "Les Champignons vénéneux d'Algérie"—Bull. de la Soc. d'Hist. Not.: 7: 203. 1917.

Cèdre—*Cedrus Libani* Barrel.

[2] Faull, J. H.: Fomes officinalis (Vill.), A Timber-destroying Fungus, Trans. Roy. Can. Inst. 11: *pl. 18–25,* pp. 185–209. 1917. Full bibliography.

Fomes officinalis grows on white pine (*Pinus Strobus*) practically throughout its range in Ontario and Quebec, and this is the only host that is definitely reported for these provinces. An Ojibway "medicine man," however, informed me that while commonest on white pine, he had also collected it from large tamaracks (*Larix laricina*) in the Georgian Bay Area, which seems quite probable as this host is recorded for Wisconsin, and hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), which, if so, is a new host, but never on red pine, jack pine, spruces, balsam, or arbor vitae. I could find no trace of it further north than within the southern limits of Temagami Forest Reserve, that is about 50 miles south of the northern range of *Pinus Strobus,* and even there it is rare, but from Georgian Bay, south and east it is so frequent as to be well-known to the Indians, lumbermen, and settlers both in Ontario and Quebec. With the cutting of the mature pine, however, specimens of the sporophores are no longer easily obtainable, and possibly at no time were abundant. According to the testimony of several people of whom inquiries were made, the fruiting bodies in some cases attain a very large size, up to 2 feet or more in length and of many pounds weight.

A plant so well-known was bound to receive a name; indeed, this plant bears at least three names, in as many different languages, and none of these even distantly resemble any of the common names employed in Europe. To the English settlers and lumbermen the punks of *Fomes officinalis* pass under the name "pineapple" or "pineapple fungus," to the French, "enfant de pin," and to the Ojibway Indians, "wabadou."

Elsewhere I have made a conjecture as to the origin of the term "pineapple," and have expressed the opinion that we have a retention here of a meaning akin to its original definition (pineapple tree was originally synonymous with pine tree, and meant a tree on which pineapples, that is, cones grew). The French designation employs the word "enfant" in quite an ordinary sense, but its non-inclusion of other fungus growths on the pine indicates the special attention paid to this one. The Ojibway name "wabadou" is quite plainly a combination of the Indian "wab" which means white and "amadou,"[3] a French word for the tinder formerly made in Europe from the context of *Fomes fomentarius* and other bracket fungi, and still current among the French-Canadians for "punk." This derivation is all the more understandable when it is pointed out that all other fungus growths on trees without distinction are called "anadou"[4] by these Indians,—evidently a slightly corrupted form of "amadou" and an easy transition in application from tinder to the source of the tinder. To the Ojibways then the fruiting body of *Fomes officinalis* is simply "wabadou,"[5] contraction of wabamidou, that is *white tinder fungus.* It is interesting that the vocabulary of the Ojibways north of Lake Nipissing includes no names for any other species of fungi; so far as I could learn not one of the many species of mushrooms which in season abound in the forest is used by these Indians as food, and so there has been no occasion for enlarging their mycological nomenclature.

That the Indians have a special name for *Fomes officinalis* is good evidence of a long-standing use of this fungus aside altogether from certain superstitions held with regard to it, but this evidence is not sufficient proof that they knew of it prior to the coming of the Europeans, especially as the Indian name is evidently based on the French "amadou." The Georgian Bay country and eastward was much travelled over by French Jesuits, fur traders and coureurs de bois from Champlain's time and the Indians made annual visits to the French stations on the St. Lawrence many years prior to Champlain's explorations, so that it may well be that their first knowledge of it came from the French, some of whom would certainly be well acquainted with a plant so highly esteemed in European medicine at that time. It may be noted in passing, however, that Dr. D. Lyall, an English botanist attached to the British North American Boundary Commission, 1859–61, the discoverer of *F. officinalis* in America, reports that the Indians of British Columbia employed this fungus as a medicine. It is likewise interesting that *Fomes officinalis* was also probably employed by the Iroquois. Mr. F. W. Waugh, the author on an excellent work on "Iroquois Foods and Food Preparation" (Memoir 86, Geological Survey, Canada, 1916) writes me, "Among the Iroquois, the Cayuga, Mohawk, and probably other Iroquois tribes, a Fomes growing on *pine* is used as a medicine for a variety of diseases, reliance being placed on the supposed magical qualities of the fungus. Among the Onondaga it used to be shot with an arrow before being removed from the tree. It was prepared in the form of a decoction." Nevertheless, while it seems quite possible that the Indians knew of *F. officinalis* before the coming of the whites, no absolute proof has been yet adduced that such was the case. It may be that some one of the Jesuit Fathers has left a record that would furnish an answer to this question.

---

[3] "Amadou" is of disputed origin. The most probable explanation is that it is derived from "amadouer" (Provençal) meaning to wheedle or coax (quite appropriately applied to a substance especially used for coaxing fire into being).

[4] In the closely related Cree language the names for "amadou" according to LaCombe are "pusagan," and "kutawagan."

[5] Through Mr. F. W. Waugh, I learn that there is an Ojibway word "wabado" meaning rhubarb—I presume the root of the medicinal Turkish rhubarb. As there is a similarity in taste and use of rhubarb and wabadou, it may be reasonably assumed that the term as applied to rhubarb is a borrowed one.

The Ojibway Indians still prize "wabadou" as a household remedy, considering it valuable for various internal complaints and at child birth. It is sometimes used dry, but is usually mixed with the sapwood of arbor vitae taken from "the south side of the tree" and boiled in water. The fruits, in the fanciful estimation of the Indians, are best when gathered in the spring, and in pulverizing should be scraped downward to be most efficacious. I learned from several independent witnesses that while the punks are of little value as charms and are sexless, yet they are surely living objects for they are reputed to change their position of their own accord, passing through the air from one tree to another, and moreover they make a sound (moaning or groaning ?) somewhat like that of a man, by which means they are readily located in the still forest. Herbarium specimen No. 3525, University of Toronto Herbarium, is part of a large punk given to me by an Indian family at Bear Id., in Temagami Forest Reserve, which was located in this manner and shot down by two Indians on a hunting trip in the southern part of the Reserve about 25 years ago. As it is scarce on the Reserve a fragment is all they would willingly spare from their dwindling supply. How the punks originate and what their relation to the trees may be is a mystery. The Indians are certain they knew and used this plant long before the whites came, but, however that may be, it is certainly of great interest that their veneration of it finds a counterpart in the veneration manifested by the Europeans of more primitive days.

Mr. J. W. Bartlett, Superintendent of Algonquin Park, who has been intimately acquainted with the white pine areas of Canada for nearly half a century, informs me that it was well known to many of the early settlers and gathered by them for various purposes. He found it fairly common throughout the lumbering areas of Ontario and Quebec. Not only was it used medicinally but also in the making of home brewed beer, and as a substitute for hops in the making of yeasts. In the yeast making, the fungus was boiled as in the case of hops and the liquid put into the new yeast to " start it working," in fact it probably serves the same purpose as the lupulin of hops in holding bacteria in check and so giving the yeast a chance to grow. Mr. Bartlett learned of it from the settlers after he came to Canada more than fifty years ago but does not know the source of their information. A teacher in one of the mission schools in northern Ontario informed me that she had known of the "pineapple fungus" from earliest recollections and that it had been a household medicine in her home near Pembroke, Ontario. Her father would collect it in the forest when cutting the wood for the winter. It was regarded as especially valuable as a spring medicine and as such was copiously administered to the children in season. Similar information was received from various other persons in Ontario.

Mr. W. F. Atkinson, Forest Engineer for the Spanish River

Pulp and Paper Co., formerly of Quebec, and for many years associated with large lumbering interests there, was the first to inform me that the "pineapple" was well and widely known throughout the white pine belt of Quebec, but most commonly under the name "enfant de pin," and so far as he knew it grew on the white pine only. It is used by the habitants for various medicinal purposes and among others at child birth. The habitant, according to one of my French-Canadian informants, who himself carried a supply in his medicine cabinet, prepares the tonic by adding two tablespoonfuls of the powdered "enfant de pin" to a pint of gin; some of this, according to the age of the patient, diluted with water, makes a very efficacious remedy. This carries us back to Dioscorides, who concludes his discourse on "Agaricum," affirming that "On the whole, it is serviceable in all internal complaints when taken according to the age and strength of the patient; some should take it with water, others with vinegar and honey or with water and honey, and others with wine."

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO,
TORONTO, CANADA.